WITH STAY STREET, SALES THE THE THE STATE OF THE STATE OF

Beverses Due, He Says, to the Generals, Not the Men-Whole Conduct of Operations Lamentably Feeble Good Spirits of the Defeated Troops-A Christmas Day Celebration in Buller's Camp-Last Letters of Correspondent Steevens.

LONDON, Feb. 3. - Week after week goes by and the only appreciable change in the British military situation in South Africa seems to be st-adily for the worse. Comparatively long Intervals of anxious stience are broken by the issue of meagre official despatches at the War Office. These despatches speak of-it is impossible to say describe-operations in such a fashion that instead of relieving anxiety, they increase it, instead of clearing up doubts, they create worse confusion; they puzzle, irritate and alarm, and the suspleion grows that, in opite of the contradiction, they are mutilated, kept back, and foolishly "edited" by the War Office authorities. The typical official despatch, as given to the public, talks comewhat vaguely of some action the exact locality of which is inadequately indicated; it praises the gallantry of the troops and expatiates upon their splendid morale; it describes, or rather ennounces, the taking of an almost impregnable position, and estimates the losses of the enemy as exceedingly heavy. The concluding passage breathes a spirit of confidence in the future, but before that comes one has to read the short sentences which start with "I regret to state." The causes for regret run on lines of exceeding monotony: the information, believed to be trustworthy, turned out to be wrong, the list of casualties is heavy, the Boers were invisible and their guns of superior range, the position was abandoned and the retirement was carried out in perfect order.

Later on the correspondents are allowed to send their despatches. But a few picturesque details, a rather more accurate description of the topography of the spot, and some more precise information of what troops were engaged, are about all the points the censor permits what Bennet Burleigh calls "the poor correspondents" to send.

"Some day," writes Burleigh, "our proper sphere-our just right to communicate with the public at home-will be accepted and recognized. Time and justice are with us, Meanwhile the military, with that disposition characteristic of our frail humanity, wish to be the authors and chroniclers of their own fame and write their own despatches-while the public burns for the truth."

A correspondent writes from Cape Colony to the Daily News, and his letter is evidently that of a man who has been on the spot, and examines the reasons for all this failure. He declares that the British infantry, cavalry, artilllery, mounted infantry and the Naval Brigade are all as good as ever they were, perhaps even better. The fault does not lie with them. Nor will be admit the superiority of the Boer as a fighting man. He says:

"Of course, they have proved more numerous than was anticipated. Their guns, too, are much more powerful than we had any idea of. but in the general character of the fighting they have proved less formidable than we expected. Their shooting, good as it still is, is not so good as we expected, and, despite of it and their really fine artillery, we have repeatedly carried all but impregnable positions by

oheer hard fighting." The real reason he finds to be the Commander-in-Chief and the Generals. "The whole condust of operations," he says, "have been la-mentably feeble." In addition to the universal complaint that the British troops were split up till they were really strong nowhere, and at many points really weak, he complains of the shilly-shallying:

"We made pretence to hold various points of such importance as railway junctions; one day we would, one day we wouldn't. Naau wpoort itself was at one moment actually abandoned; fortunately it never fell into the enemy's hands but that was good luck.

"But, apart from that, the dislocation of things is so great that, not only is there no cooperation between the various brigades, but for three or four days after an important battle the general result of it will be unknown to the commander even of the brigade operating geographically nearest to it. The result of the operations at Colenso were not known at was over. Not known to the English, that is but known to the Boers long before.

"Then, in detail, our leadership has so signally failed. At Gras Pan, for instance, if tim had been given, a sufficiently strong and fresh force of cavalry could have been got up-thirty hours would have done it-to cut off the ene my's retreat; another regiment of cavalry and another battery, and we might have netted the alternatively they might have cleared and saved us the battle.

"At Magersfontein twenty-four hours' delay would have given us the balloon and a preliminary examination of the Boer position, and have saved us the Highland Brigade. At Stormberg the rules which guide a subaltern 'playing soldiers' at Aldershot may be set aside by a general who has an empire for a stake. The route at the last moment is aitered (incidently, the alteration upset well-laid plans which not only promised success, but from what really happened seem as though they would have commanded it); the precaution of placing an officer at the point of divergence, necessary at Aldershot in daylight, may be dispensed with in the presence of a real enemy, and at night. What wonder that the new plan miscarried, and we met an ignominious repulse!

"It might happen, too, that if a General could be found or made who could realize that horses can't go on for weeks at a time under the saddle for thirty hours at a stretch, and with very short intervals of rest when they at length come off; that mules won't work all day unless carefully fed and watered whenever any fair chance of doing so, even at some slight risk, offers; that even men are better fighters if they are given a chance every eight hours or so of having some food; and that, under an African sun, with pretty rugged ground to water bottles are not only a desirable thing

but an actual physical necessity. "These are the factors which we did not expect, and to which, as I think, is due the unlooked-for phase in our South African operations. Until they are corrected, and until the men who commit such oversights and perpetrate such omissions are made to suffer the penalties which in all other professions attend failures, so long shall we have to pay a heavy price in blood and treasure to achieve our ends."

It is no wonder that the English people are depressed, as undoubtedly they are, though determined and willing as ever to do and spend anything to command ultimate success. It seems almost astounding that the troops at the front keep up their spirits as they do. Take, for example, this account of Christmas Day in Frere Camp, ten days after the defeat at Colenso and the loss of eleven guns.

sailors who asked the innocent question on up as?' asked the naval officer. 'Please, sir, as John Bull and, if you don't mind, sir, as President Kroojer, sir; and might we 'ave a gun carriage, sir?' 'What for?' 'To take 'em round, sir.' The eloquent, smooth spokesman had said, and only the decision remained to be taken. 'Well, if you wont insult the old gentle-

man, 'said the naval officer, meaning Mr. Krüger. 'Very good, sir,' said the bland and chuckling sailors. The naval officer had said words which were his bare duty, and had been indulgent at the same time, as was right and natural on Christmas Day; and forthwith the figure of Mr. Krüger was destined to the honest comments of Jack and Tommy. John Bull wore a red face and Union Jack which covered a form of appropriate rotundity, and President 'Kroojer' was more elaborately and tenderly equipped with a beard of unravelled rope, a stove-pipe hat made out of a tin cylinder, a black coat, a white flag, and a tattered umbreller labelled

'The Effects of Lyddite.' The spirit of fraternity with which the figures on the carriage treated each other after all secured the fulfilment of the officer's conditions.

"All that day and the next the camp had the appearance and the spirit of a fair. Men were throwing stones at bottles hung in rows for prizes; running foot-races in their stockingfeet; wrestling on horseback stripped to the waist; cock-fighting; teams of soldiers were pulling tugs-of-war with sailors, and being beaten by them; sailors were mounted precariously on horses and mules and were so pleased at finding themselves on something four-footed that they rode their animals without relaxation all day, and in the races cheerfully and invariably came in last; officers scampered across a rockstrewn and breakneek country in point-topoints; there were trotting races, in which everybody cantered and the judge tore his hair. The air was filled with the flerce and peremptory shouts of the officers who were managing the soldiers' playtime-'B company to pull now! B company here! B company, will you come here, at once? B COMPANY 'Please, sir, we've pulled three times running Well, you'll have to pull again if youwant to win ; and at this point B Company obediently lays hold of the ropes. All the time the sun blazed on us and the thick floating atmosphere of dust sanded our clothes and hair, gritted our teeth and choked our throats. And, lastly, in the evenings there were concerts round bright fires, and a comic singer might have been heard banging out imitations of the 'pompom,' or Boer Maxim-Nordenfeldt gun, plane brought from a looted farmhouse. 'What's that?' he demanded when he had made the imitation, and some of the men, to show that they

"Only a few days before Sir Redvers Buller had suffered a reverse-Sir Redvers Buller, for whom we had not admitted to ourselves the possibility of failure. And we were now in full sight of the hills where we had been checked, in leed within range of some of the guns which had helped to send us back to our camp; yet we were not sad. After what I have said you will see that the camp was jovial. Can it really be true that reverses are an incentive to glorious retrievement Of course all the camp was very sorry for the wounded men-the dead, after all, had appeared to be happy enough-but then this sorrow had lasted no longer or gone no deeper than sorrows commonly do in war time. The fact is the camp was in great triumphantly employing the new spirits. standard of emotions which war imposes You in England, the papers make us understand, were swallowed up at this time in the sublime emotions of pity and fear; we, with an unexpected reverse behind us, with the prospeet (according to our belief) of the bloodlest battle of the campaign before us, were just as I have described. A perfect study, you may say, in frames of mind."

recognized the wonderfully exact sound, slid

down and ducked their heads seats.

Even in Ladysmith they seem to keep up their spirits though their chief complaint is the deadly monotony of life during a siege. This week three letters written by poor George Steevens, who died there of fever, have appeared in the Daily Mail. A peculiar interest is attached to them in that they must be almost the last things he wrote. On Nov. 10 he writes:

"It must be said that the Boers made war ike gentlemen of leisure; they restricted their ours of work with trade unionist punctuality. Sunday was always a holiday; so was the day after any particularly busy shooting. They seldom began before breakfast; knocked off regularly for meals—the the luncheon interval was 11:30 to 12 for riflemen, and, 12 to 12:30 for gunners-hardly ever fired after tea-time. and never when it rained.

"I believe that an enterprising enemy, of the Boer strength-it may have been anything from 10,000 to 20,000, and remember that their mobility made one man of them equal to at least two of our reduced 11,000-could, if not have taken Ladysmith, at least have put us to great loss and discomfort. But the Boers have the great defect of all amateur soldiers: they love their ease and do not mean to be killed. Now, without toll and hazard they could not take Ladysmith.

do wanton damage in town. They fired almost xclusively on the batteries, the camps, the balloon and moving bodies of troops.

"To do them justice they did not at first try to

In a day or two the troops were far too nugly protected behind schanzes and reverse slopes, and grown far too cunning . expose themselves to much loss.

"The inhabitants were mostly underground that there was nothing really to suffer except casual passengers, beasts and empty buildings. Few shells fell in town, and of the few many were half charged with coal dust, and many never burst at all. The casualties in Ladysmith during a fortnight were one white civillan, two natives, a horse, two mules, wagon, and about half a dozen houses. And of the last only one was actually wrecked; one of course the most desirable habitation in Lalysmith-received no less than three shells, and remained habitable and inhabited."

Of the fighting on Nov. 9, when the Boers made a general attack on the town, he says: "They had said-or it was among the million things they were said to have said-that they would be in Ladysmith on Nov. 9, and I believe they half believed themselves. At any rate I make no doubt that all this morning they were feeling-feeling our thin lines all round for a weak spot to break in by.

"They did not find it, and they gave over but they would have come had they thought they could come safely.

"Every officer who showed got a round of shrapnel at him. Their riflemen would follow an officer about all day with shots at 2,200 yards: the day before they had hit Major Grant of the Intelligence, as he was sketching the country. Tommy, on the other hand, could swagger along the sky-line unmolested. No doubt the Boers thought that exposed Cæsar's Camp lay within their hands."

"But at the close of the fighting not a point had the Boers gained. And then came 12 o'clock, and, if the Boers had fixed the date of the 9th of November, so had we. We had it in cover, long marching and heavy fighting, full mind whose birthday it was. A trumpet-major went forth, and presently, golden-tongued, rang out, 'God bless the Prince of Wales.' The General up at Cove Redoubt led the cheers. The sailors' champagne, like their shells, is being saved for Christmas, but there was no stint of it to drink the Prince's health withal. And then the Royal salute-bang on bang on bangtwenty-one shotted guns, as quick as the quickfirer can fire, plump into the enemy.

"That finished it. What with the guns and the cheering, each Boer commando must have thought the next was pounded to mincemeat. The rifle-fire dropped."

"Nov. 11.-Ugh! What a day! Duil, cold, dark and misty-the spit of an 11th of November at home. Not even a shell from Long Tom to liven it.

"The High street looks doubly dead: only a sodden orderly plashes up its spreading emptiness on a sodden horse. The roads are like rice pudding already. "May we dress up, sir?" It was the childlike and the paths like treacle. Ugh! "Outside the hotel drip the usual loafers with Christmas Day. 'What do you want to dress | the usual fables, Yesterday, I hear, the Leicesters entited the enemy to parade across their front at 410 yards; each man emptied his magazine, and the smarter got in a round or two of independent firing besides. Then they went out and counted the corpses-230. It is certainly true; the narrator had it from a man who was drinking a whiskey while a private of the regiment, who was not there himself, but

had it from a friend, told the barman. "Altogether, collating the various authorities, I make out the enemy's loss yesterday at 1,200

"Nov. 12-Sunday and a few rifle shots, but. in the main, the usual calm. The sky is neither obscured by clouds nor streaked with shells. I note that the Sunday population of Ladysmith. unlike that of the city of London, is double and treble that of week days.

"Long Tom chipped a corner off the church yesterday: to-day the Archdeacon preached a sermon pointing out that we are the heaven-

appointed instrument to scourge the Boers.

Sound, but perhaps a thought premature. November 13.-Laid three sovereigns to one with the Graphic yesterday against to-day being the most eventful of the slege. He dragged me out of bed in aching cold at four,

see the events. "At daybreak Observation Hill and King's Post were being shelled and shelling back Half battalions of the First, Sixtleth, and Rifle Brigade take day and day about on Observa tion Hill and King's Post, which is the continuation of Cave Redoubts. To-day the Sixtieth were on Leicester Post. When shells came over them they merely laughed. One ring shell burst, fizzing inside a schanz, with a steamy, curly tail, and splinters that wailed a quarter of a mile on to the road below us the men only raced to pick up the pieces.

When this siege is over this force ought to be the best fighting men in the world. We are learning lessons every day from the Boer. We are getting to know his game, and learning to play it ourselves.

"Our infantry are already nearly as patient and cunning as he; nothing but being shot at will ever teach men the art of using cover, but they get plenty of that nowadays.

"Another lesson is the use of very, very thin firing lines of good shots, with the supports snugly concealed; the other day fourteen men of the Manchesters repulsed 200 Boers. The gunners have momentarily thrown over their first commandant and cheerfully split up batteries. They also lie beneath the schanzes and let the enemy bombard the dumb guns if he will-till the moment comes to fire; that moment you need never be afraid that the R.

A. will be anywhere but with the guns. "The enemy's shell and long-range rifle-fire dropped at half-past 6. The guns had breached a new épaulement on Thornhill's Kop-to the left of Surprise Hill and a few hundred yards nearer—and perhaps knocked over a Boer or two-perhaps not. None of our people hurt, and a good appetite for breakfast.

"In the afternoon one of our guns on Cæsar's Camp smashed a pompom. Fiddling Jimmy has been waved away, it seems. The Manchesters are cosey behind the beet-built schanges in the environs of Ladysmith. Above the wall they have a double course of sandbags -the lower placed endwise across the stone, the upper lengthwise, which forms a series of copholes at the height of a man's shoulder. "The subaltern in command sits on the high-

est rock inside; the men sit and lie about him, sleeping, smoking, reading, sewing, knitting, It might almost be a Dorcas meeting. "I won the bet.

"Nov. 14.-The liveliest day's bombardment

"A party of officers who live in the main street were waiting for breakfast. The new President, in the next room, was just swearing at the servants for being late, when a shell came in at the foot of the outside wall, and burst under the breakfast room. The whole place was dust and thunder and the half aerid, half fat, all sickly smell of melinite. Half the floor was chips; one plank was hurled up and stuck in the ceiling. All the crockery was smashed and the clock thrown down; the pictures on the wall continued to survey the scene through unbroken glasses.

"Much the same thing happened later in the day to the smoking-room of the Royal Hotel. It also was inhabited the minute before, would have been inhabited the minute after, but just then was quite empty. We had a cheerful lunch, as there were guns returning from a reconnoissance, and they have adopted a thoughtless habit of coming home past our house. Briefly, from 6 till 2 o'clock you would have said that the earth was being shivered to matchwood and fine powder. But, alas! man accustoms himself so quickly to all things, that a bombardment to us, unless stones tinkie on the roof, is now as an egg without salt.

"The said reconnoissance I did not attend knowing exactly what it would be. I mounted a hill, to get warm and to make sure, and it was exactly what I knew it would be. Our guns fired at the Boer guns till they were silent; and then the Boer dismounted men fired at our dismounted men; then we came We had one wounded, but they say home. they discovered the Boer strength on Bluebank, outside Range Post, to be 500 or 600. I doubt if it is as much: but, in any case, I think two men and a boy could have found out all that three batteries and three regiments did. With a little dash, they could have taken the Boer guns on Bluebank; but dash there was

"Nov. 15-1 wake at 12:25 this morning, apparently dreaming of shell fire.

"Fool, says I to myself, and turn over, when -swish-h! pop-p!-by the piper, it is shell fire. Thud-thud-ten or a dozen, I should say, counting the ones that woke me. What in the name of gunpowder is it all about? But there is no rifle fire that I can hear, and no more shells now: I sleep again.

"In the morning they asked the Director of Military Intelligence what the shelling was: he replied: 'What shelling?' Nobody knew what it was; and nobody knows yet. They had a pretty fable that the Boers, in a false alarm fired on each other; if they did, it was very lucky for them that the shells all hit Ladysmith. My own notion is that they only did it to annoy-in which they failed. They were reported in the morning, as usual, searching for bodies with white flags; but I think that is their way of reconnoitring. Exhausted with this effort, the Boers-height -did nothing all day. Level downpour all the

afternoon, and Ladysmith a lake of mud. "Nov. 16-Five civilians and two natives hit by a shrappel at the railway station; a railway guard and a native died. Languid shelling

during morning. "Nov. 17-During morning-languid shell ing. Afternoon, raining-Ladysmith wallow-

"And that-heigh-h-ho!-makes a week it. Relieve us, in Heaven's name, good countrymen, or we die of dulness."

HOW THE DOCTOR GOT THERE. Not Always Easy for a Maine Physician to Reach His Patients.

From the Lewiston Evening Journal. The other day a country physician received a call to go from his place into a lumber camp in the far Brassua region and it was such a call as a doctor cannot well refuse. So he went to West Cove on Moosehead with a big coat and wearing leggins and shoe packs, as the low moc-

A lumberman was there and this man had made arrangements to carry the doctor up as far as West Outlet on a handcar on the Canadian Pacific Road. They had to stop once and unload the hand car on to their backs in a gully so that a freight train could go past.

Above West Outlet a certain portion of the lake surface was free of snow and the doctor and the woodsman guide strapped on their skates and started. There were numerous "wrinkles, huge bulging rifts in the ice where the moving of the mighty surface had met and made ruin. When they came to one of these wrinkles the woodsman went ahead and prodded and poked until he found a place where they could cross.

It is possible that more men have been drowned in the waters of Moosehead by carelessness in crossing wrinkles than by any other cause.

in the waters of Moosehead by carelessness in crossing wrinkles than by any other cause. By the time they got to the mouth of Moose River the doctor was obliged to own to his sturdy companion that he was fair tuckered. The man had a Moose sled there in the bushes. He had left it there when he had come out after the doctor. He piled the medicine man on with his case, wrapped him in blankets and set away along the tote road. There was no team out, for there was much uncertainty as to when the doctor would be able to get along.

When he could be walked. The rest of the time he rode. The tough little man of the woods seemed in no wise wearied. He told the doctor that it was easy enough to make those kind of trips when one was toughened to it.

In the camp was one of the bosses who had been caught in a snub line and who had had most of the flesh on the calf of his leg rasped off by the cruel cable.

The doctor did what he could for the sufferer. Before he finished his labors there a messenger came from a camp ten miles above. They had learned that a physician was in the section and they wanted him. Ten men were down with grip and colds and two had pneumonia. So the doctor went up to that camp. There was nothing else to do. He says that if he had refused he guesses they would have loaded him along. He came out after six days in the woods.

IN CAMP WITH METHUEN.

UNSEEN FOR THAT LONG KEPT THE BRITISH FROM KIMBERLEY.

Little Known of the Boers or Their Pur

poses-Effect of the Expedition to Sunnyside-Disaffection in the Colony-Boer Scouting-The Boers' Way of Fighting MODDER RIVER CAMP, Jan. 5. - Passing from 1899 to 1900 has been a change only in the calen dar. All other things here are the same, and the altered date means only that the great events of the war are to be chronicled under this year, for they have yet to be decided. When the movement loward achieving them will start on this side no man knows. A month ago the Kimberley relief column was here preparing itself for the advance on its objective. We are still here, and in outer appearance the camp is different only in being populated by rather more men and guns and it showing along its outer lines more signs of permanent address than it did in the fortnight beween the battles here and at Magersfontein. Probably there are to-day fewer Boers across ou

advance route than there were on Dec. 11, but

heir trenches are stretched over a few more miles

of veldt, and they have more big guns. Other

wise they are inscrutable as ever. On our side daily history is a blank broken occasionally by little things that rouse disproporionate comment. The most notable so far has een the taking of Sunnyside laager on New Year's Day. It deserves remembrance for three reasons. It was the first blow, and a completed, successful one, struck at the open hostility of rebel colonists who have been coming down in considerable numbers on the Boer side of the fence since the British advances in Natal, in the north of the colony, and here on the west, were all brought to a temporary standstill three weeks ago. Had the hostile population on the west of Lord Methuen's command achieved even a trifling success against a force sent to reduce them, th Boer commandoes would have swarmed with re inforcements. It is certain that some hundreds f Dutch sympathizers recruited from Douglas are already with Cronje's army. Their defeat a Sunnyside is thus important as a deterrent. It is cordially welcomed here, moreover, as a success for the Australian volunteers, already the best liked of the colonial attached forces. That their mounted infantry should have mastered veldt tactics so effectually at the first essay is counted s good omen for the future value of the colonia colunteers in the campaign. Their success at Sunnyside, where six Boers were killed and twelve wounded, might have been treated more rationally han by the news agency which displays informa. tion for the troops and required fourteen pages of telegraph forms for its narration - more space than the same source has hitherto devoted to the greatest engagements of the campaign.

Little news reaches here that would enable one o see the whole situation in fair perspective. That t is less gloomy than some cabled comments assert am sure. The Boers have, on the frontier a east, done nothing to show that they can conduct systematic aggressive operations for any ength of time. I am told that hitherto the individual Boer has had a free hand when once it is decided to defend a position. He picks his shelter, sees that he has a practicable way out, and shoots. All his life the man has probably been used to this untrammelled manoeuvring, and any disciplinary restraint would probably impair his fighting effectiveness. But it is obvious that this wholesale individuality must be repressed if a eneral is to embark on a campaign of conquest. And it cannot be insisted too strongly that Lord Methuen's column is engaged already on a campaign of conquest. We are on British territory but it is a foreign country all the same. The Germans across the Meuse could not have me more sullen hostility from the peasants of France in 1870 than the British troops have encountered rom the sparse, but watchful, sinister, mobile population of this British colony since the First Division left Orange River. It is already the in vasion of the enemy's country, with the double disadvantage that the actual enemy on the Spytfontein kopjes has so far nothing to lose. His property is yet intact. Perhaps that is the key their obdurate inch-by-inch resistance as they

fall back to their own frontier. MODDER RIVER, CAMP. Jan. 12 - Just & month ago Lord Methuen's force returned here from Magersfontein. The battle of Dec. 11 had demonstrated that more men were needed if the Boers were to be dislodged from their strongholds between here and Rimberley. In the month that has clapsed there has been no considerable addi-Another field bettery be arrived. A second 4.7 naval gun is posted a mile to the right of its companion facing the kopjes, and near it are two naval 12-pounders, also fresh arrivals. Another howitzer battery arrived yes terday. But otherwise the composition of the division has not altered during the month. The Guards, the Ninth and the Highland brigades still constitute the infantry arm. The gaps from killed and wounded are filling up with the almost daily arrival of fresh details. The Ninth and Twelfth Lancers are still all the regular cavalry, though the Scots Grays are expected almost immediately. So far, then, the division remains numerically almost unaltered.

There is something, however, in its attitude and disposition that suggests defensive rather than aggressive operations. The camp, for one thing, is now fortifled on all sides. The outposts are strengthened, the reserve pickets increased threefold. There is the daily, and latterly sometimes nightly, firing of the big guns telling the Boers that we are active. The enemy, too, are less sparing of artillery ammunition than they were, and consequently they have spread themselves over a larger portion since they were last attacked. V.b. ther they are in greater numbers is not clear, for they are extraordinarily mobile. Probably long lines of their trenches are unoccupied for days, but their standing, that of mounted infantry, enables them to get to any point of defence before it can be attacked by a heavy attacking force. And their scouting, though almost invisible, is most vigilant. Yesterday morning just after dawn one of their parties was seen about thousand yards out from our third picket on the extreme left front of this position, which is the weakest in natural defences of any around the camp. This Boer outpost numbered eight mounted men spread over about two hundred yards. It was astonishing to see how quickly and how successfully they made use of every dip and fold in the stretch of yeldt to conceal themselves as they ambled slowly along. By broad daylight, at half-past 4, they and their lean wiry ponies had vanished back to their own lines.

A stray Raffir escapes pretty frequently from the Boer lines into ours. He is generally starying, or says he is. One advanced to our pickets the other morning waving a white flag the size of a dirty table cloth. Two men with their rifles went out to meet him. As they approached he increased his emblems of peace by waving excitedly in the other hand a partly white handkerchief. They brought him back to the picket, he shouting "God Save the Queen" all the while. The officers remitted him to the Provost Marshal for inquiries and gave him a loaf of bread to eat on the way. The Raffir was so eager to show at once that he was willing to do what was expected of him that he seriously choked on the bread on trying to get rid of it in the donor's presence. These Raffirs are mostly turned down to work on the railway below De Aar, the limit of martial law. The trustworthiness of the native laborers here is uestioned by several who say that notwithstanding the more drastic rules they can still communicate with the Boers. Some officers advise that they should be hobbled at night like mules and a guard put over them. In every little party of spies or suspects taken there is at least one native. Some arrests of white men were made this week at the morning market which is held near one of the pickets. They had been overheard exchanging news and opinions in Dutch. But these incidents, trifling enough in all likelihood, are only magnified into consequence. We suppose that it is on instructions that we are "sitting tight" here, taking the minimum of risk while doing what damage is possible without leaving

our position. ise they can find. In the hour before sunset when it is tolerably cool, inter-regimental teams play to crowded and enthusiastic crowds of their comrades. The river, narrow, not deep, and slimy under foot though it is, has always its hundreds of bathers. A good many men have

monufactured primitive fishing rods and display great patience along the reaches above where athing is allowed. They catch a few hideous looking things, sometimes weighing twelve pounds or more, black and tough about the head, which is bigger and wider than any other part of them, and is slit by a mouth like a ragged sack. It is not known how they taste, as few have the courage to eat them.

NEW TO THE GROCER,

A Swindle With a Ten-dollar Bill Practised by a Fluent Young Man. The grocer sat on a high stool, his elbows or the counter and his face buried in his hands. The Brooklyn man came in to get a quarter's

worth of eggs. "Hello," he said, "what's the matter now?" "I'm thinking," said the grocer, "that the man who said that all the fools are not dead knew pre-

cisely what he was talking about." "How could you think otherwise?" remarked the Brooklyn man, with true Brooklyn humor, with all the customers you have"

"Hold on," said the grocer, "this is no joke Let me tell you about it. A little while ago I was sitting here doing nothing in particular when in rushed a very pleasant looking young man. He had a lot of bills in his hand, and he wanted to know if I could let him have a ten-dollar bill for small bills. He said that he wanted to send \$10 away in a letter, and didn't like to put small bills in an envelope. Well, I'm a pretty good-natured sort of a man and I told him that I would be very glad to oblige him. So, while I went into the drawer to get the bill, he counted out \$10 so that I could hear him, and then fished out an envelope into which he placed the bill that I gave him. Then he started out of the store. He didn't seem in a great hurry, and so when, in counting over the money that he had given me, I found that there was only 89 I didn't have any suspicions of intentional wrong-doing on his part, but credited the matter to a very natu-

ral mistake.
"Well, I called him back, and he was very apolo-

on his part, but credited the matter to a very natural mistake.

"Well, I called him back, and he was very apologetic; said it was a curious mistake for him, and a few other things that I don't remember. As a matter of fact he talked so fast and so smoothly that half of what he said escaped me in my admiration for his oratorical powers. While he was talking he was fishing around in his pockets for an odd dollar. Apparently he couldn't find one, for he finally said:

"Well, I guess I'll have to give you your bill back until I can get that other dollar.' Then he looked at the envelope in his hand and continued: 'Gee' that's toobad. I'vegone and sealed that envelope up and it's addressed and stamped and your ten-dollar bill is inside. I'll tell you what we might do, though, he went on, after a moment's thought. 'You give me my nine small bills, and I'll go out and get the other bill. In the mean time you hold on to this envelope and when I come back I'll give you the entire \$10, and we won't have to open up my letter at all.

"Well, I swent I couldn't see any harm in this arrangement, and I said 'yes,' without a moment's hesitation. What makes me so darn mad now is that I was excessively polite to the duck. Why, I fairly bowed him out of the store, and after he had gone I carefully placed the envelope in my cash drawer and locked it up. Then I waited for fully half an hour for the young man to come back and when he failed to show up I took the envelope out and ripped it open, not with any idea in my head that anything was wrong, but simply because I was impatient with the man for being so inconsiderate after I had done him a favor. Well, there was a neatly folded piece of paper in the envelope and on it was written in a neathand:

"I'll be back when the robins nest again."

"Say, even then it was a full minute before the truth dawned on me. When it did hit me it came like a ton of brick. 'Oh, you gosh durned fool.' I murmured, and then I came around on this stool and sat down to think I was still thinking when you

rou go out."
"Up in Reubenville, where I lived before I came to Brooklyn," said the Brooklyn and a call that film flam."

"Oh, you did, eh," said the grocer, "well, I don't know what they call it in Brooklyn, but it sa good game and when I go broke in the grocery business I m going to try it on some guy myself," and the grocer went back to his thoughts, while it is a least the grocer went back to his thoughts, while said the Brooklyn man, "we used to

MOY KEE AS A BOY.

A Chinese Talks of His Childhood in the Old Country.

From the Indianapolis News. "When I was a boy," said Moy Kee, tea merchant, laundryman and interpreter, at 216 North Delafare street, "I went to school in my native village of Shin-King, eighty-seven miles from Pekin. I was 7 years old when I started to school and, of course, the teacher was a man. Now there are women teaching in China, Chinese women, but that is a new thing. We sat on stools with desks before us and studied aloud. years old I could write very well, and had to learn every word of a long lesson by heart. The teacher had a stick, and sometimes, but not often, he would punish a boy, either by striking him on the hand or on the seat of his trousers. There are no bad boys in China as there are

in this country. The boys are respectful polite to all who are older than themselves. and polite to all who are older than themselves, and while they have their plays and their fun they do not think it fun to hurt any one.

"You have seen boys place a package on the sidewalk and when a person stoops to pick it up you have seen that package for there is a string tied to it, and a boy at the other end of the string) move away under a crack in the fence. That is an old trick in China.

"The boys here in America do not know what long school hours are. I went to school early in the morning, before the birds began to sing. After that we went to breakfast and then to dinner and in the evening to supper. Those were long, long days, the boys here would say, but we Chinese boys did not say anything about it. We just sat on our stools and sung out our lessons all at the

boys did not say anything about it. We just sat on our stools and sung out our lessons all at the same time as loud as we could.

"Vacation came along in the harvest time when the rice was gathered. Then we played at flying kites. We did not, as boys do here, fly kites any time. No, there was a season for it, and we flew them at no other times. The boys in China walk on stilts just as boys do here, and play at blindfold, hide and seek and leap frog, but all in a different way from here.

"We had great sport fighting beetles. We would find these in the fields and train them to fight and we would lay wagers on which would win just as you do here on prizefighters.

hight and would wish just as you do here on prizefighters.
"No neighborhood in China can afford to have a bad boy in it. Suppose a Chinese New Year, when we are all shooting fire crackers, some one

No neugnborhood in China can afford to have a bad boy in it. Suppose a Chinese New Year, when we are all shooting fire crackers, some one would shoot a revolver. There would be great trouble. Not only would the one who shot the revolver be punished, but his relatives and neighbors and the magistrate of the district would be punished or reprimanded, because in China such things must not happen. A stranger could walk through my village day or night with no one to hurt him. He would be safe all the time. It is not so in this country.

"We had great sport in shooting at sparrows with bow and arrow, and nobedy ever shot at persons, as some boys do here with airguns. The boys in China laugh a great-deal, and laugh very loud sometimes, but they have plenty of sport without hurting any one.

"When I was 0 years old my mother died and my father gave me a stepmother. When I was 12 years old my uncle, a tea merchant in San Francisco, brought me to this country. Twenty-eight years ago d am now 53 years old) I went back to China and got a wife. My father and my stepmother found a wife for me. I did not see her until we were married, but she is a good wife and came to America with me. She is the only one in Indiana. I have been back to China eighteen times, but I am a naturalized American citizen, and vote at elections."

AQUARIUM'S HARBOR SEALS. Ever Playful and by No Means Lacking

Intelligence. Lately the ever playful harbor seals at the Aquarium have been fed partly on smelts and partly on cut-up strips of codfish. Their food is varied from time to time according to the market supply of fresh fish, and according to the requirements of the seals themselves. Just now they are getting some smelts, which the seals don't like as well as they do codfish. The food they don't like is always fed to them first, else they might not eat that at all, but they let it alone as long as they can without running the risk of getting nothing. Thus the other day when smelts were dealt out to them the seals dawdled over them. and, so to speak, all but turned up their noses, as though they were not hungry. It seemed as though it might be necessary to let them have their way and give them other food entirely. But presently, when they discovered, and had realized as indeed they quickly did, that it was smelts first or nothing, they nipped them up promptly as fast as they were tossed in. They might prefer something else, but there was no doubt about or appetites. And the harbor seals' intelligence, as well a

And the harbor seals' intelligence, as well as their playfulness, is something remarkable. It is a common thing for two of the seals to seize the same piece of fish and tug on it till they pull it apart or one pulls the whole away from the other. The other day when they were eating smelts, the smellest of the three seals happened to seize a smelt by the tail, getting about a quarter of the little fish in its mouth. Nelle, the biggest of the little fish in its mouth. Nelle, the biggest of the little fish in its mouth and apparently safe, but as it came that way Nelle stude, it off with the smelt still in its mouth and apparently safe, but as it came that way Nelle struck it off with her fliper close to the little seal's nose and then ewing her head round it and nipped it up and ate it.

BRER RABBIT.

Negro Tradition of How His Upper Li Came to Be Cleft.

Scientifically, there is a distinction between abbits and hares, although both belong to the genus Lepus. To the lay mind they are much the same. Both are grass-eaters, afraid of their own shadows, with short tails, very soft fur, and deeply

cleft upper lips. This is how the negroes account for the cleft: In the beginning, they say, the Lord made the rabbit among the first things created, and set him to watch other things as they were made. After awhile he formed the moon, gilded it beautifully, and set it up beside a tree to dry. The rabbit had charge of it, but fell nodding, and let Brer Fox slip in and began to lick off the gold. This angered the Deity, who flung a stick at the sleepyhead with such force that it buried itself in his upper lip. Then by way of punishment it was ordained that the mark should descend through all the rabbit generations. The dark places on the moon, of course, are the marks of Brer Fox's

Feeble as they are, rabbits constitute a menac to things ever so much more powerful, even to man himself, through their faculty of growing and spreading That has been demonstrated over and over, by the rabbit plague of Australia. Everybody has heard how a homesick colonial turned loose a few pairs in a rabbitless land, and how within a few years the pairs had multiplied until they devoured every green thing in the neighborhod, and seriously threatened the raising of sheep. The plague is not yet wholly abated, although the Government and the flock-masters together have spent a good many million dollars. Trapping, shooting, poisoning, even the establish ment of canning factories, have only sufficed to keep the rabbits moderately in check.

"Timid Wat." as English folk call him, is voracious feeder. He grazes closer even than sheep, and, like the sheep, delights to season his grasses with tender bark and buds. Curiously enough, when forage is most plenty, from April to Octoper, he is leanest and lankest, unfit for eating if full-grown, but deliciously toothsome if young. The minute frost falls he begins to fatten. Three nights of it put him in prime condition. He seldom feeds then save at night. In-deed, that is his favorite feeding time. From March to mid-May he prefers the earliest morning

in which to ravage gardens.

All winter long he keeps fat and saucy, nibbling All which to ravage gardens.
All winterlong he keeps fat and saucy, nibbling buds and bark, and searching the desolate cornfields for overlooked nubbins, or grazing off the tenderest stalks of springing winter wheat. He haunts orchards, too, not only for scattered apples, but to nip low-hanging boughs, and to girdle young trees. Unchecked he will quickly and surely destroy a whole newly-set orchard. Indeed, until the bark becomes hard he is a constant danger.

He is even a greater pest to the garden. Early peas, beets, potato slips, he devours in a night, unless, indeed, the gardener has been wise enough to try homeopathic prevention. That is to say, unlessas his peas and beets peeped above ground he killed a rabbit, tore it to pieces in a tubof water, then trailed a swab wet in the liquid all around the plot. Timid Wat has evidently a mighty keen nose. He will not pass the barrier until there falls a hard rain. Then, of course, it needs to be renewed. Similarly orchards are protected by tunning the trunks two feet up with a piece of feetherbit skips.

renewed. Similarly orchards are protected by running the trunks two feet up with a piece of fresh rabbit skin.

Rabbit mothers pluck a soft down from their own breasts to line the earthen burrows in which they rear their young. There are four or six of these in a littler and from six to eight litters a year. Like kittens the young rabbits are blind at birth, but inside of a week they get use of eyes and limbs, and in a fortnight are frisking about, seeing life on their own account. They begin to graze as soon as they leave the nest, which is nearly always exposed, and but a few inches underground.

to graze as soon as they leave the nest, which is nearly always exposed, and but a few inches underground.

Snowfall develops in Brer Rabbit a curious weather instinct. If he hops about, browsing and frisking, you may be sure there will come but a very few inches of snow: if he crouches snugly in a grass-tuft, then look out for at least a foot. As he crouches, he moves gently back and forth, now a little on this side, now on that. Thus he shapes for himself a snow-chamber a little bigger than his own body. By and by the deepening snow arches it over, but his warm breath melts a tiny hole in the roof, thus preventing suffocation. Sometimes it is two days before the furry occupant leaves this refuge. By that time the snow is commonly crusted over hard enough to bear his weight.

When snow lies thus, rabbit hunters look close for the breathing holes. Once found there are two ways onen. One, the pot hunter's, is to fall flat upon the hole, and grab Brer Rabbit as he bursts up through the snow, swing him thrice around above the head, then knock out his brains. The other, the sportman's, is to rout out the cotton-tail, but give him a chance for his life, never slipping a dog in chase until he has a fair thirty yards start. Both methods are practised so successfully every snowy winter it is a slothful faries house indeed anywhere in the rabbit countil

cessfully every snowy winter it is a slothful faries house indeed anywhere in the rabbit countil which does not have rabbits by the dozen to brom or stew or smother.

STRANGE EATING CUSTOMS.

section of the control forms which does not have railing to the does not brond or size or smother.

STRANGE EATING CESTONS.

Long and Short Sweetening as an Adjunct of the control forms of the contr to find fault with our toilet accommodations with supper ahead of us. We hadn't seen a dining car since breaktast and were as hungry as wolves. "The widow had evidently laid herself out on that supper. She'd got some fresh beef, which we knew was a rarity in those parts. It was a steak and she'd fried it. Did you ever taste fried steak? Don't. And there were saleratus biscuit as big as grape fruit and as yellow, and beiled potatoes and a plate in the middle of the table containing what we decided was cake. This last and ourselves divided the awed attention of the eight children at the table. It was the coffee, however, that was our do winfall.

"Miss Pimley, d'you take long or short sweetening in your coffee?" our hostess inquired as she was about to fill my wife's cup.

"Now, two marked characteristics of Mrs. Pimley are a disinclination to flaunt her ignorance and a fondness for plenty of sugar in her coffee. She considered for a moment and said.
"Long sweetening, if you please, as though she'd been accustomed to the expression from her earliest youth.

"Our hostess took down a sticky-locking jug from the realiest youth, down a sticky-locking jug from an adjoining shelf and poured a quantity of very black molasses into the steaming cup. There were several flies in the melasses and two or three other insects whose identity could not be determined, and when they rose to the surface she carefully skimmed them off with a specin.

"I didn't wait to be asked. If long sweetening' meant melassos short sweetening might mean no sweetening at all. I locked at Mrs. Pimley who was giving a correct imitation of Lot's wife. Perhaps also she was waiting for more insects to come up.

"Short sweetening for me, if you'll be so kind." I said, smiling delightedly.

"Our complaisant hestess rose from the table and set the melasses jug back on the shelf. Then she took down a large cake of maple sugar, bit off a lump and dropped it in my cup of coffee. "Somehow both Mrs. Pimley and myself entirely forgot our coffee until it was too

M'CARTNEY IN POLITICS.

THE LATE COMMISSIONER'S STRUGS

GLES WITH CROKER. Both Were Lenders in the Old Twenty first Ward - McCartney Represented H. O. Thompson and Croker Was John Kelly's Deputy-A Memorable Elections

The Twenty-first ward of New York chy ounded on the south by Twenty-six a street on the north by Fortieth, on the west by Sixth avenue and on the east by the Fast River. For practical purposes, however, the Twenty-first ward among politicians and statesmen extend from Twenty-sixth to Fortieth street and from Lexington avenue to the East River, and it o-day, as it was a quarter of a century ago, part of town which has withstood most of the material changes that have transformed other parts. It is, essentially, a district of old-fashioned naltered and well-rented tenement houses' with a few factories interspersed, having nearly mide way on its eastern boundary the Thirty fourth street ferry to Long Island City and, at the extreme outheastern corner, Bellevue Hospital and the adjacent public institutions. The ward is a strong Democratic district, and

ong known as the starting point of many notable politicians, the home, when in political controls of John Kelly, Chester A. Arthur and Hubert O Thompson, at an early period the political abid-ing place of James O'Brien and Richard B. Connolly, and later the "home district" of Richard Croker, the present leader of Tammany Hall In the political upheaval of 1872, occurring at time when Mr. Croker was a local Alderman, two places of political prominence, one of these being Bernard Biglin, Republican, and the other James McCertney, Democrat, the recent Commission of Street Cleaning. Mr. Biglin's career as a oarsman began with the crew of which he and his brother John were the organizers and leading spirits, and in which were five of the Biglin broth ers. They obtained a wide reputation and were virtually the champions of the United States dun ing a long period, being victorious in numerou contests on the lakes and rivers in various parts of the country. The success of Mr. Biglin, who became a member of Assembly and afterward Republican leader in the district, led to the prompt coming forward of other local oarsmen, Jame McCartney among them, his first vote being cas in the election of 1872, when the struggle for Demo cratic supremacy in the county of New York was being carried on by two Twenty-first ward leads ers, one, James O'Brien, the nominee for Mayor and the other, John Kelly, newly installed leader of Tammany Hall.

As a result of the contest between the two but not the result which either one sought of intended, a Republican Mayor was chosen, and the minor antagonisms of ward politics in the Twenty-first among Democrats were accentuated to the extent of becoming permanent. McCartney joined the Tammany Hall organization, as the other local oarsman, Biglin, had joined the Republican organization, but when a few years later Hubert O. Thompson became a seceder from Tammany Hall, McCartney, who held at that time a place in the Department of Public Works, became one of the members of the County

that time a place in the Department of Public Works, became one of the members of the County Democracy, among his associates on the committee from the district at that period being Allen Campbell, afterward City Comptroller, J. M. Fitzsimons, now one of the Judges of the City Court, Richert Hall, Joseph Gordon, Gen. Thomas F. Bourke, and Hugh F. Farrell, afterwards member of the Board of Aldermen. Richard Croker was at that time the leader of Tammany Hall in the Twenty-first ward, then the Eighteenth Assembly district and Hubert O. Thompson was his leading opponent for local mastery, McCartney being his first lieutenant.

When Mr. Thompson became Commissioner of Public Works, he appointed Mr. McCartney Superintendent of that bureau of the Water department which had control of the supply of water to ships an important post, the salary of which was \$2,400. During the greater part of the ten years preceding the summer of 1886 when Mr. Thompson desired suddenly—on July 26, 1886, at the Worth House, Broadway and Twenty-fifth street—the contest for control fn city politics, so far as the Democratic majority was concerned in it, was carried on between two Twenty-first ward leaders, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Thompson with their local representatives fighting for control in the "home district," Mr. Croker for Kelly and Mr. McCartney for Thompson. The enduring bit terness of the strife came very near culminating in 1883 when Croker failed to get an appointment as Fire Commissioner from a Mayor elected by Tammany, and, challenged to secure an endorsement in his own district, ren for Alderman as the Tammany candidate, opposed by Robert Hall as the County Democracy part of it devolved upon Mr. McCartney, the campaign not leasing until there had been one sheating after vales on the leasing until there had been one sheating and the volved upon Mr. McCartney, the campaign not leasing until there had been one sheating and the volved upon Mr. McCartney, the campaign not leasing until there had been one sheating and the volved upon Mr.

HOTEL AND ROARDING HOUSE Accommodations of a desirable character may be found by a reference to THE SUN'S adventising columns.—Adv.